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past. Abounding life in the present is the indispensable prerequisite to a decent apprehension of the life of the classic past, to that constant, inevitable, instantaneous and correct association of the life of the past with the life of the present that, more than anything else, can vivify the teaching of the Classics and make that teaching worth while. The maintenance of Latin in its rightful place depends, therefore, let it be said again in closing, upon us, teachers of the Classics. We can discharge that high mission by being men and women worth while, unshakably convinced of the value of our task, of the importance of our work to our pupils and to the world, and by preparing ourselves in every possible way, through our lives and our studies both, as we "press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling".

C. K.

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF METHODS OF TEACHING <MODERN LANGUAGES>¹

THE GRAMMAR METHOD

When the modern languages first became a regular subject for serious study in secondary schools it was natural that teachers, having no other model to imitate, should adopt the time-honored plan followed in the department of Greek and Latin. According to this method the pupil is first put through a volume of paradigms, rules, exceptions, and examples which he learns by heart. Only when he has thoroughly mastered this book is he allowed to read; and even then his reading is usually regarded as a means of illustrating and emphasizing grammatical principles, rather than as a source of inspiration or of literary education. The amount of foreign literature studied by the class is, moreover, extremely small; but it is all carefully analyzed

and translated, every lesson being, in general, repeated several times. Composition is used as an instrument for increasing still more the student's familiarity with inflections and rules. The foreign language is never spoken, and pronunciation is considered unimportant.

This method has fallen into discredit; and while it is not yet entirely banished from classical instruction, it can scarcely be found, in its original purity, among the modern language courses of any civilized region. It has, however, certain undeniable advantages. In the first place it trains the mnemonic faculty; in the reaction against the hard, unattractive schooling of our fathers, modern pedagogical fashion has gone so far that the power of conscious acquisition and retention is hardly exercised at all; children go to college or out into life with an embryonic memory, and the teacher's task rivals the labor of the Danaïdes. Secondly, the careful study of grammatical rules and their nice application in translation and composition form one of the best possible exercises in close reasoning. It may be urged that logical processes are not natural to the child; neither are they natural to the uninstructed adult; but to be a successful student or an intelligent citizen, a boy or man must be able to arrive at rational conclusions. Hence it is one of the chief duties of education to afford practice in clear and orderly thinking. . . . Now, grammatical analysis and synthesis, while less mechanical and more varied in their operation than elementary mathematics, are nearly or quite equal to it as a means of inculcating the habit of accurate ratiocination.

On the other hand, the grammar method is open to criticism on the ground that it neglects two of the most important objects of foreign-language study: the broadening of the mind through contact with the life, the ideas, and the forms of thought and expression of different times and countries; and the cultivation of the artistic sense by the appreciative study of literary masterpieces. A still more potent objection is the contention that pure grammar is not calculated to inspire interest in pupils of the high-school age. . . .

THE NATURAL METHOD

At the opposite pedagogical pole from the process just described, we find the conversational or 'natural' method. This educational 'naturalism' is a reaction against the inflexible systematism of earlier teachers; we should, therefore, expect it to be somewhat aggressive and somewhat formless, more given to pulling down than to building up. It is a principle, an impulse, rather than a plan; and its products depend, to a greater extent than those of any other school, on the personality of the instructor. Too often the results of a protracted and supposedly successful course of unalloyed conversation are a rapid, but unintelligible pronunciation, the

¹ Following the plan outlined in 6.33,42,50, we present a part of the Report of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America (printed as Chapter XXVI of the Report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1897-1898: published separately by D. C. Heath and Co.; price 16 cents). The Report was submitted in December, 1898, and was adopted a year later. In *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 6.53 Professor C. H. Grandgent, of Harvard University, in a letter written in October last, said of this Report, "I wrote the part descriptive of methods and have seen no reason to change my opinions since then". Reference may be made here to a paper by Professor Grandgent, *Is Modern Language Teaching a Failure?* (*The School Review* for 1907, 15.513-534), in which he characterized the current teaching of Modern Languages as distinctly inferior to the current teaching of the Classics; see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4.74-77,82-85. It seems desirable to reproduce here, as fully as possible, the Sections of the Report (III-IV) which deal with methods: our readers will make for themselves application of those Sections to the teaching of Latin and Greek. I have diligently listened to those who advocate the use of the Direct Method in the teaching of Latin and have read their writings, but nowhere have I heard or seen as clear a presentation of the Natural Method or the Oral Method or the Conversational Method or the Direct Method (all these names are in indiscriminate use: see e. g. *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 6.33,34) as applied to Latin as Professor Grandgent set forth fourteen years ago, in dealing with the Modern Languages. Teachers of the Classics must, as soon as possible, sound the depths of the Direct Method, to determine whether they will use it at all; it is of the first importance, then, to have a right understanding of the method, not only of its merits, but also of its weaknesses; one can hardly expect the ardent devotees of the Direct Method to indicate its defects and dangers.

fluent use of incorrect forms, and, worst of all, a most discouraging self-complacency. Some peculiarly gifted teachers have succeeded in combining alertness with a reasonable degree of accuracy, but it will probably be found, in all such cases, that the instructor has resorted to devices not strictly 'natural'.

What is the genuine 'natural method'? In its extreme form, it consists of a series of monologues by the teacher, interspersed with exchanges of question and answer between instructor and pupil—all in the foreign language; almost the only evidence of system is the arrangement, in a general way, of the easier discourses and dialogues at the beginning, and the more difficult at the end. A great deal of pantomime accompanies the talk. With the aid of this gesticulation, by attentive listening, and by dint of much repetition the beginner comes to associate certain acts and objects with certain combinations of sound, and finally reaches the point of reproducing the foreign words or phrases. When he has arrived at this stage, the expressions already familiar are connected with new ones in such a way that the former give the clue to the latter, and the vocabulary is rapidly extended, even general and abstract ideas being ultimately brought within the student's comprehension. The mother tongue is strictly banished, not only from the pupil's lips, but, as far as possible, from his mind. Not until a considerable familiarity with the spoken idiom has been attained is the scholar permitted to see the foreign language in print; the study of grammar is reserved for a still later period. Composition consists of the written reproduction of the phrases orally acquired.

This method—if 'method' is the proper term—is based on two general ideas; one true, the other false. The first is the belief that the interest so necessary to the successful prosecution of any study (and especially of language work) can most easily be aroused by the actual spoken use of the foreign tongue. The second is the theory that a boy or man can best learn a new language in the manner in which an infant first acquires its native speech. Hence comes the epithet 'natural'. The advocates of this view overlook, first, the fact that the child requires eight or ten years of incessant practice to gain even a tolerable command of its own tongue, and, secondly, the vast difference between the mind of the baby and that of the youth. The really natural methods of acquisition at these two stages of development are almost diametrically opposed. Let us consider, for instance, the learning of pronunciation. The newborn child, after various unsuccessful experiments, reproduces sounds correctly because it has no previous habits of speech to contend with. The boy or man, unless he is phonetically trained or exceptionally acute of hearing, does not imitate at all. He merely substitutes for the several

strange vowels and consonants the English sounds which the foreign ones happen to suggest to him. That is why the pronunciation of conversational classes is generally not a whit better than that of scholars taught after the most antiquated fashion. In the attempt to inculcate the other elements of speech—inflections, syntax, and phraseology—the purely imitative process shows itself to be almost equally inadequate. We may justly urge, furthermore, against this style of teaching, that it provides little discipline for the intelligence; that it affords only the poorest kind of mnemonic training; that it favors vagueness of thought and imprecision of expression, and, finally, that it sacrifices the artistic interest of language study to a so-called 'practical' one. On the other hand, it certainly does awaken enthusiasm among its disciples, and it stimulates and holds the attention.

The natural method has been vehemently attacked and just as vigorously defended. At present the violence of the conflict has abated, and we are able to judge dispassionately the results of its introduction into our educational life. Those results have been mainly good. In summer schools and other institutions that have used the imitative process exclusively most of the pupils are persons who have had or will soon get some practice in grammar and reading. For them the conversation lessons are supplementary and form a useful addition to their training. In schools and colleges that have not accepted the 'naturalistic' theory the fame of the new method has obliged teachers to adopt some of its practical features, thus bringing much-needed life and variety into their instruction. It seems probable that the next generation will regard 'naturalism' rather as a vivifying influence than as an independent method.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD

Out of the conviction that modern-language study should be made attractive, and out of the desire to adapt instruction to the known workings of the human mind, has come a system that seems more deserving of serious attention than the grammar method or the 'natural' style of teaching. This is the system invented by Gouin and brought into general notice by Bétis.

The psychological method rests on the principle of the association of ideas and the habit of 'mental visualization'. The whole current vocabulary of a language, in the form of short, idiomatic sentences, is divided up into groups, every group consisting of phrases that are intimately connected in subject. One group forms a lesson. These brief divisions are gathered together in chapters, each of which treats of one general topic, and several chapters make a 'series'. When a pupil has gone through all the series, with numerous reviews, he will have mastered (so we are told) the whole spoken language. Every lesson is first worked out orally and

then studied by the pupil from his book. On presenting each new word to the beginner the instructor exhorts him to close his eyes and form a distinct mental picture of the thing or act represented. This image (it is affirmed) will remain indissolubly connected with the word, and the evocation of the one will always recall the other. Sometimes real objects or drawings are used, and pantomime is frequently resorted to; but in most cases reliance is placed on the child's active imagination. It is never considered a sin to put in a word or two of English, and at the outset that language is very freely employed. Although most of the talking is done by the teacher, the pupils are constantly called upon to repeat his sentences and to answer questions. After the first lessons written compositions may be prepared, made up of phrases already acquired. Grammatical instruction is begun early, concurrently with the other exercises, but the reading of consecutive texts is postponed until the bulk of the ordinary vocabulary has been learned. Many innovations have been introduced into the presentation of grammar, but most of them are more radical in appearance than in reality. Some, however, are extremely ingenious, and will doubtless be copied by instructors who do not see fit to adopt the whole system.

The Bétis method has the following obvious advantages: It trains the memory; it fascinates the student and holds his attention more closely than any other mode of teaching now in vogue; it gives the pupil, in a reasonably short time, a ready command over a large, well-arranged, and well-digested vocabulary; it affords, through some of its conversational groups, an insight into the life of a foreign country. As for the other side, the system seems, as far as we can ascertain the facts, to lay itself open to these criticisms: It affords but little opportunity for the exercise of judgment; it entirely neglects, in the first years, the cultivation of the aesthetic sense, and assigns literary study to a stage which high-school pupils will scarcely ever reach. Moreover, its treatment of pronunciation is decidedly unsatisfactory; but this defect can probably be remedied without disturbing the rest of the scheme.

THE PHONETIC METHOD

Pronunciation, neglected in the three modes of instruction just mentioned, is the very foundation of a system that has of late years attracted attention in all northern Europe, and has gained a considerable footing in Germany and Scandinavia. Its advocates, while not entirely free from the intolerance and the self-confidence so characteristic of enthusiastic reformers, are men of sound scholarship, successful experience, and good standing in the educational world. As far as can be ascertained, they have arrived at results which go far toward justifying their seemingly extravagant claims. . . .

The phonetic method resembles the 'natural' and

the 'psychological' schools in that it takes the modern spoken language as a basis and at first relies mainly on oral instruction, using as far as possible the foreign language itself as a medium of communication. Unlike most 'conversation' courses, however, it is very systematically constructed and its beginning is strictly scientific. It begins with a training of the ear and the vocal organs, the pupils being thoroughly drilled in the vowels and consonants of the strange tongue. These sounds are considered both as isolated phenomena and as elements of idiomatic phrases. The phrases, in turn, are combined into dialogues, descriptions, and stories. At this stage printed texts are used, but only in phonetic notation. The ordinary spelling is carefully kept from the students during the elementary period. It is said that the transition from sound symbols to standard orthography presents no serious difficulty. Objects, pictures, and maps are constantly displayed, and every effort is made to familiarize the class with the surroundings, the institutions, the habits, the character, and the mode of thought of the people whose language they are learning. The phonetic texts gradually increase in length and difficulty, and some of the latest are representative of literature. Inflections and syntax are studied inductively. Composition consists first of the oral and written reproduction of matter already heard or read, then of combinations of familiar phrases. Systematic grammar is reserved for a late stage, and translation comes last of all.

It is evident that this sort of instruction requires a special preparation and a special apparatus. Although the pupils are not taught phonetics, it is essential that the teacher be something of a phonetician. . . .

This method, while it lacks the logical discipline of the old grammatical instruction, is more successful than any other in forming a good pronunciation and in giving pupils a ready and accurate control of the spoken language. . . . From the standpoint of mnemonic education, too, it ranks high. In stimulating interest it is nearly equal to the 'natural' and 'psychological' courses, and it is second only to the latter in holding the attention. . . . The attempt to give scholars, by ear and eye, by description and by the use of objects and pictures, a correct and vivid idea of foreign life has been carried further by the phoneticians than by any other school; but there is no reason, save the lack of rightly prepared instructors, why this feature should not be introduced into every method; the neglect of it defeats one of the principal objects of modern-language study. . . .

What are the disadvantages of the 'phonetic' plan, when we consider it from the point of view of our American high schools? In the first place, it seems, like other 'oral' methods, to overlook the importance of literary education, for it postpones the reading of

real books to a stage that is beyond our secondary period. In Europe, where intercourse between foreign countries is easy and frequent, and a command of several languages has a recognized commercial value, it is natural that a practical mastery of the strange tongue should seem highly desirable. With us, isolated as we are, a speaking knowledge of French and German has, except for teachers, but little pecuniary worth; and even in the case of a student who has acquired it for pleasure alone, the opportunities for practice are so few that his hardly won accomplishment will soon slip from him. Familiarity with pronunciation and a certain ability to handle foreign constructions are, indeed, essential to a proper appreciation of the literature; but if literary study is not reached, of what avail is the preparatory training? For we must bear in mind that the vast majority of our pupils—those for whom the course should be planned—will not continue their education beyond the high school. It has been pointed out that oral work, besides exercising the organs of speech, arouses interest and fosters a certain alertness of mind, and is therefore valuable for its own sake. We may question, however, whether these benefits make up for the sacrifice of all the aesthetic culture and the intellectual broadening that come only from the reading of good books.

To this criticism the European advocates of the method would surely reply that they believe in abundant reading, after the student has mastered the spoken idiom. It appears, then, that the real fault of their programme, as applied to our conditions, is not so much that its underlying principle is entirely incompatible with our creed as that it calls for much more time than we allot to foreign language. In fact, we may well doubt whether with our three or four hours a week for three or four years our scholars would ever reach the end even of the elementary stage; they certainly would not go beyond it; their acquisition would be only a fragment. If we should wish to introduce this or any other thorough-going method, we should be obliged to increase the importance of French and German in the school curriculum; and such increase is desirable from every point of view. . . . As long, however, as our present conditions last it is clear that we must give up something. Until we are all willing greatly to lengthen the time given to the linguistic part of our children's education, we shall have to renounce the idea of a full, well-rounded knowledge of French and German, and, selecting the portion of the subject that appears most important for the greatest number, devote ourselves to the cultivation of that restricted field. Considerations of this nature have led many thoughtful teachers to adopt a mode of instruction that we may call the 'reading method'.

THE READING METHOD

The title explains itself. The study of texts from the very beginning of the course, abundant practice in translation at sight, leading ultimately to the ability to read the foreign language with ease and without the interposition of English, are the principal features of this programme. Grammar and composition are regarded merely as a help to reading, and are reduced to the essentials; sometimes accidence and syntax are first learned inductively, but oftener a small text-book is used concurrently with translation. Great importance is attached to the use of good English in the renderings. Pronunciation receives scant attention; there is little or no oral exercise.

This method has been much used of late in our schools and colleges, especially in those that have large classes, a short course, and an American teacher. The great advantage of the process is that it quickly enables the student to read French and German literature—not with the complete appreciation that only an all-around command of the language can give, but with the same kind of intelligence and enjoyment with which good classical scholars read Latin. Indirectly, it helps the pupil to form a good style, and to increase the volume and precision of his English vocabulary; it cultivates the taste by dwelling upon delicacies of expression; it exercises the memory through the enforced retention of words and idioms; it trains the linguistic sense by calling attention to the points of resemblance and difference in various tongues; and the exact fitting of phrase to thought forms an excellent discipline for the judgment.

On the other hand, in addition to the fact that it deals with only one aspect of language, the reading method is lacking in vivacity and in stimulus to the attention; it interests only the more serious pupils. Moreover, the continued use, year after year, of an easy way of teaching—for it is comparatively easy, and requires but little special training—may prove demoralizing to the instructor, dull his appetite for self-improvement, and make him indolent and easily satisfied with his qualifications.

METHOD AS RELATED TO THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS

If all our classes were in the hands of born teachers, ideally prepared for their work, advice with respect to method would be quite superfluous. Every teacher would create for himself the method best suited to his class and to his own peculiar gifts. His personality would infuse life and efficacy into any process he would be likely to adopt. But in a profession so widely pursued we can not expect the majority of its followers to show genuine vocation. The most of our teachers are made, and we must see to it that they be as well made as possible. . . .

But while it is easy to insist, broadly, upon the

importance of adequate preparation for teachers, it is not so easy to define, in exact terms, the minimum of attainment which can be regarded as sufficient. Much will always depend upon personality, upon general alertness of mind and aptitude for teaching. The best of teachers learn with their pupils, and it will sometimes happen that one who knows too little of his subject will teach it better than another who knows more. Nevertheless, it remains broadly true, and should never be forgotten for a moment, that what the teacher most needs is to be a master of his subject. With the sense of all-around mastery come independence of judgment and the right kind of self-assurance. Without this sense the attempt to follow someone else's method, however good the method may be in the hands of its inventor, can never produce the best results.

To be ideally prepared for giving instruction in a modern language, even in a secondary school, one should have, aside from the ability to teach and the general personal culture necessary to secure the respect and attachment of pupils, a thorough practical command of the language to be taught, a solid knowledge of its literature, and a first-hand acquaintance with the foreign life of which the literature is the reflection. To be decently prepared, he should, at least, have read so much in the recent literature of the language that he can read about as easily as he would read matter of the same kind in English. He should have studied the principal works of the great writers, and should have taken a course in the general history of the literature. He should know thoroughly the grammar of the language in its present form. If he has some knowledge of the historical development of forms, such knowledge will help him in his teaching, especially in the teaching of French to pupils who have studied Latin. He should be able to pronounce the language intelligently and with reasonable accuracy, though he may not have the perfect 'accent' of one who is to the manner born. He should be able to write a letter or a short essay in the language without making gross mistakes in grammar or idiom, and to carry on an ordinary conversation in the language without a sense of painful embarrassment. . . .

With respect, now, to the main subject of this section, it is hardly necessary to observe that the teacher who can not himself speak his modern language should not attempt seriously to teach his pupils to speak it. He should not try to work the 'natural method', or any private variation thereof; if he does, he will be almost certain to do more harm than good. He may and should provide memory exercises that exhibit natural colloquial forms, but in so doing he should be guided by some good manual, and make that the basis of the class-room work. . . .

But if the availability and the goodness of the

several methods described in the preceding section depend mainly upon the fitness of the teacher, they also depend upon the age of pupils, the probable length of the course, and the size of classes. If the study begins in childhood and the beginner is looking forward to a long and thorough course of the best possible kind, it is obviously the right thing that he devote a large amount of time at first to the acquisition of a faultless pronunciation and an easy command of the colloquial language. He will then have the best possible foundation for literary study. But if he begins later in life and the problem is to realize the maximum of benefit from a limited course, he should devote less time to the colloquial language and proceed more quickly to the study of literature. It is also evident that in classes of considerable size the most efficient colloquial practice can not be given; the pupils may learn to understand the language (and this is of course well worth while) but they will not learn to speak with much facility. If this report were intended to meet ideal conditions, that is, if it were addressed to teachers whose training would permit them to choose freely from the methods that have been described and to combine them with wise discretion, the committee might be disposed (although in that case, as we have already remarked, advice with regard to method would hardly be needed) to make some such recommendations as the following: For very young children, say up to the age of 10, the 'natural' or imitative method of the nurse or the governess, with some help perhaps from the 'psychological' method. For a course of six years, beginning, say, at the age of 12, a combination during the first three years of the 'psychological' and 'phonetic' methods, accompanied by some study of grammar; after that a more thorough study of grammar, together with the reading and translation of good literature, supplemented by oral practice in the language and written composition. For a four years' course, beginning in the high school, we should recommend a similar procedure, the division between the 'psychological-phonetic' and the 'reading' method coming, however, somewhat earlier, say, after the first year. In combining the 'psychological' and 'phonetic' methods the general plan of the former would be followed, while the latter would be imitated in its treatment of pronunciation and, so far at least as French is concerned, in its use of phonetically transcribed texts. For any shorter course we should advise the 'reading' method, accompanied, however, by scientific training in pronunciation, drill in the rudiments of grammar, and a moderate amount of oral practice.¹

¹The Report contains valuable footnotes giving a good bibliography of the various methods discussed; though these notes were written fourteen years ago, the books and articles mentioned in them remain in large part available, and through them those interested can gain access to the later literature of the subject. As suggested above, page 57, the application of Professor Grandgent's discussions to the teaching of the Classics will be at once easy and profitable.
C. K.